EARLY ASSINIBOINE TRADING POSTS OF THE SOURISMOUTH GROUP, 1785-1832

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THE HISTORICAL AND SCIENTIFIC
SOCIETY OF MANITOBA

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BY

DAVID A. STEWART, B.A., M.D., LL.D.
PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY

The seasoned life of man preserved and stored up in books.
—JOHN MILTON

AMPLIFICATION OF A PAPER READ BEFORE THE SOCIETY
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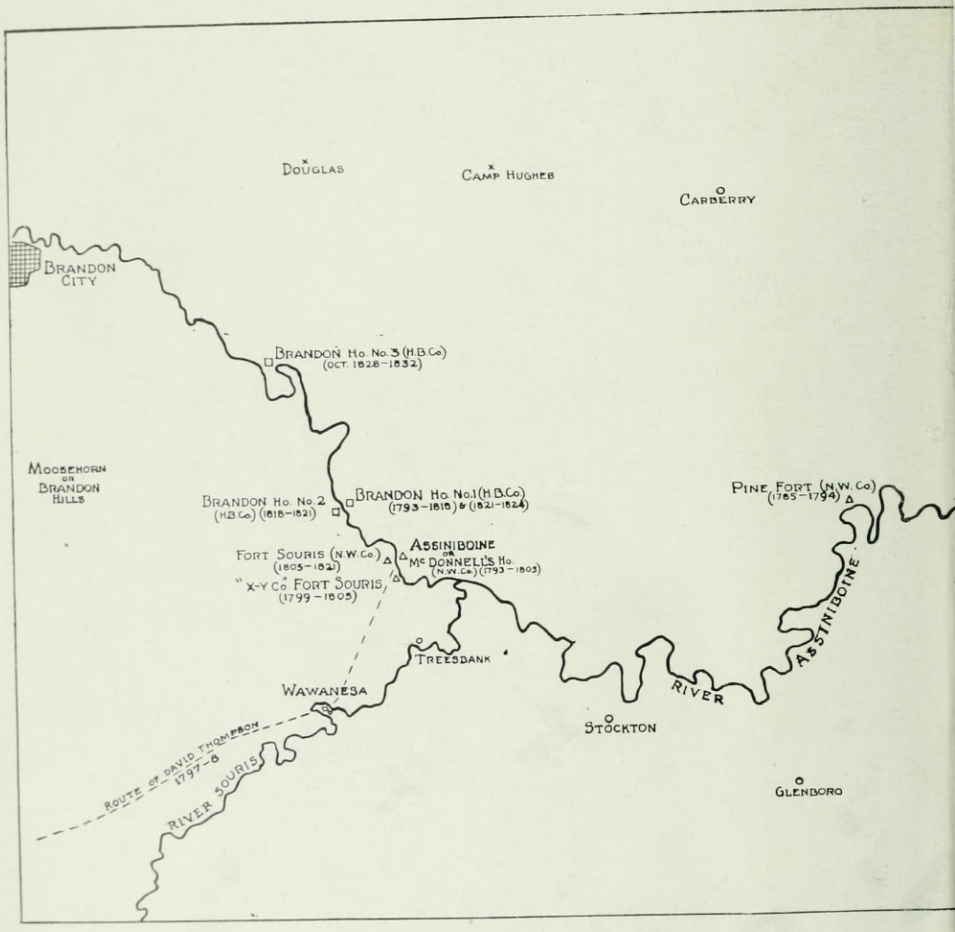


MAP OF THE ASSINIBOINE RIVER IN THE SOURIS-MOUTH AREA SHOWING THE SITES OF EARLY TRADING POSTS

Introductory Note

This paper attempts, in a study of the various sites themselves, and in all I could find in journals relating to them, to settle some very vexed questions as to which was which and what was what among the early trading posts of the Assiniboine near the mouth of the Souris River. My conclusions are not all quite final, even to myself, but at any rate data have been collected and placed side by side for farther study.

I have tried to do a still greater service by gathering together within one pair of covers, and making available for ordinary readers, especially living in the district in question, a considerable part of what the journals, which few can have for themselves or get access to, have to say about trade and life hereabout one hundred and fifty to one hundred years ago. With this in view, the quotations and appendices are more copious and full than might be necessary in an ordinary historical study. I am intentionally putting as much as I can of the source books thus into general circulation.

I am particularly grateful, and the readers of the booklet will be also, for kind permission from the Hudson's Bay Company to incoporate material hitherto unpublished, letters of Governor Simpson, afterwards Sir George, relating to this district, also a report by Peter Fidler upon agriculture in this and other Manitoba districts in 1819, his interesting manuscript map of that year, and several other notes from records of Brandon House in the Hudson's Bay Company archives, London.

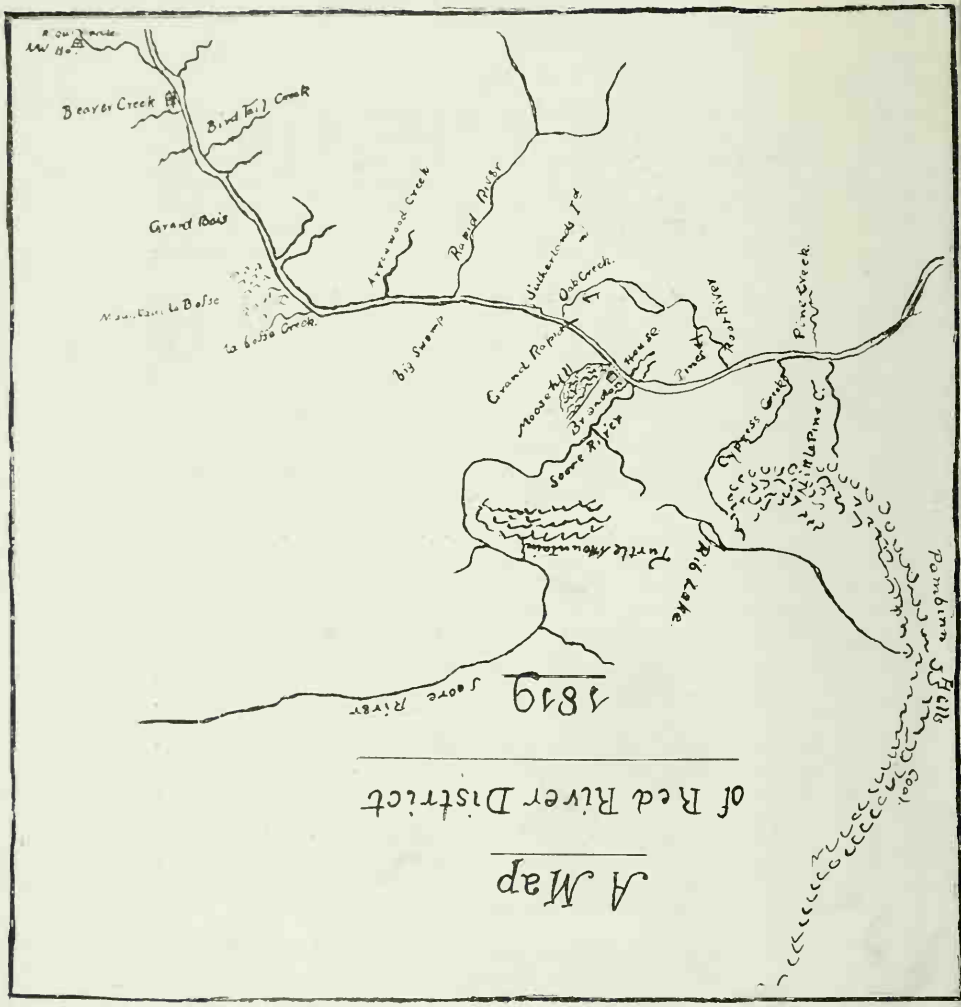
It is a great pleasure and privilege also to be able to use the very notes and sketches made by Mr. J. B. Tyrrell when he explored four of the Souris-mouth group of fort sites in 1890.

For my first introduction to the old forts, and knowledge of the various sites, and for several pleasant visits to them and discussion about them, I am indebted chiefly to my friend, Mr. Stuart Criddle, and, at Pine Fort, to Mr. J. C. Snart.

I congratulate the Rotary Club of Brandon upon their having marked fittingly, exactly one century after it was built, the last of the Brandon House trading posts.

Finally, this paper, though read before the Historical Society in 1928, at the request of Dr. C. N. Bell, and with his kindly encouragement, was brought up to date and published in July, 1930.

D. A. S.



PETER FIDLER'S MAP OF 1819 SHOWING H.B. POSTS, INCLUDING BRANDON HOUSE—AT THAT TIME ON SOUTH SIDE—COPIED BY THE H. B. CO. FROM MANUSCRIPT MAP IN THEIR POSSESSION

(Somewhat upside down in appearance but faithful copy of original)

Early Assiniboine Trading Posts of the Souris-mouth Group, 1785-1832

Drop back a few years, a very short step, a mere century and a third, forget skyscrapers, railway time-tables, trans-oceanic flights and tin-can scrap heaps along the river banks, wipe out Winnipeg, and we are back at "The Forks", *the* forks, that is, of the Red River and the Assiniboine or Stone Indian River, in 1793; say, in the fall, at the beginning of "the season"; that is, the fur season, upon which the whole year centres.

From 1793 it is less than sixty years since the French with Sieur de la Verendrye reached these river forks, and forty since they left them. The Hudson's Bay charter is already ancient, but the first post that cautious company built away from the Bay—Cumberland House,—is less than twenty years old. The new "opposition" from Montreal—Canadian, Scotch, English, French, traders, who followed the preposterous French fashion of going to the Indians for their furs and so did away with the easy fashion of having the Indians bring them to the Bay—these new traders, or some of them, had formed the North-West Company just ten years ago, and are now about ripe for the row among themselves out of which will come the "New North-West", or "X. Y." Company. Already domineering old "Marquis" or "Premier" Simon McTavish frowns on visionary young Alexander Mackenzie, who spent a whole summer four years ago trying to reach the Pacific, and found instead only a mighty river to the Arctic. The same unmanageable Mackenzie was absent from the council at Grand Portage this summer, and by almost superhuman hardihood did reach the Pacific, though old Simon hasn't heard of it yet. David Thompson, aged 23, is still a Hudson's Bay trader, as he will be for four years more, when he will join the North West Company. And it will be eighteen years yet before the earliest settlers of Thomas Douglas, Earl of Selkirk, arrive to bring strife—and civilization perhaps—to the Red River.

IF WE WERE VOYAGEURS IN 1793

We are travelling with the North-Westers, so our journey did not begin at "The Bay" or even at "The Forks", but at the "Grand Portage" on Lake Superior, forty miles south of its successor of eight years hence, Fort William, where each summer East meets West, and a thousand men discuss and deliberate, map out trade routes for a new empire,

check over west-bound goods and east-bound pelts, pack and repack, drink, fight and make up again, in the greatest fur trade half-way house of the day. From the West came the "North men" with bales of furs; from the East:—

> Cape to cape, breasting waves, gunwale-laden "lake" canoes,
> Swarthy Montreal brigades, with sweating, singing crews,
> "Proprietors," "apprentices," "partners," and "voyageurs,"
> "Comers and goers," "pork-eaters," guides and clerks and coureurs,
> "North-Westers," "company men," "free traders," "X. Y's,"
> McTavishs, Mackenzies, McDonalds and McGil'vrays,
> With packages of blanket cloth, duffel and spirit dregs,
> Steel knives, flint-locks, bears' grease and powder kegs,
> Meeting at the Grand Portage with "northmen" and "winterers,"
> Opposing "oppositions" and thwarting all "interlopers,"
> Carousing and changing packs with "northmen" and "winterers,"
> Adventuring, exploring, to north and west seas,
> Violent men, wilful men, strong men these.

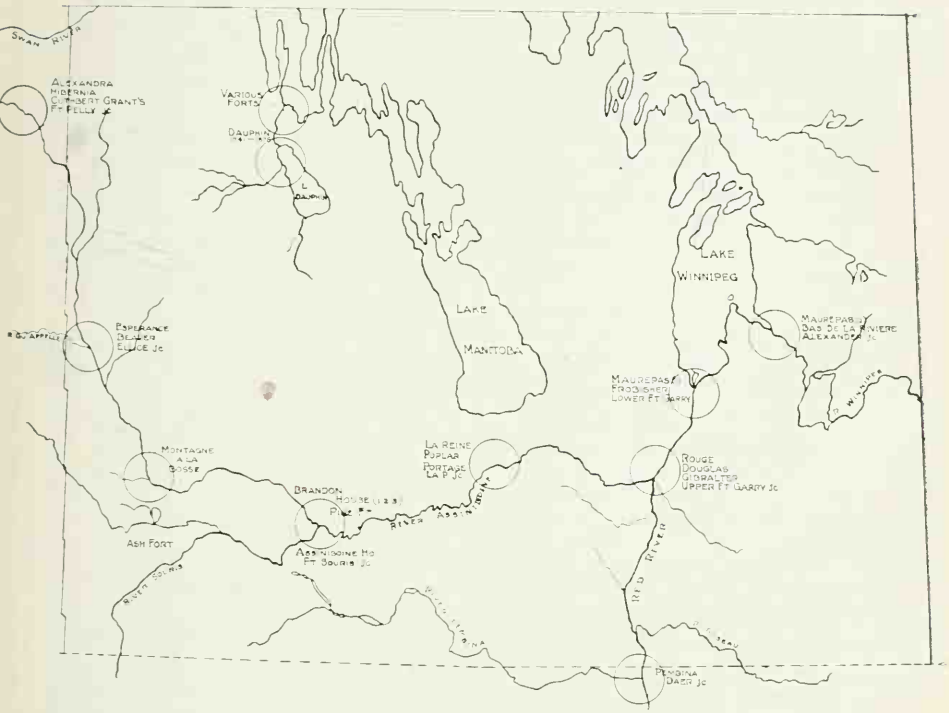
As for us, the Council has decided that we "winter" upon the Assiniboine. So, with a brigade of half a dozen "four fathom" "northern" canoes—*canots du nord*—packed with bales of merchantable goods, and manned by "proud North-West bucks", we have climbed the portages of the Pigeon, traversed the Rainy and Woody lakes and the river between them, pushed our way down what was the Maurepas River, and will be the Winnipeg, but now is called the White; passed the North-Wester post established a year ago at Bas de la Riviere, somewhere near the present Fort Alexander, and, on the north side, the site of the (probable) second Fort Maurepas; entered the Red, passed the sites of the first Fort Maurepas and of the fort of Mr. Frobisher, carried past the Sault a la Biche, later the St. Andrew's Rapids of the Selkirk people, and here we are, as has been said, in the fall of 1793, at "The Forks".

Our "bourgois", "proprietor", "partner", officer or boss, with the brigade, is Cuthbert Grant, who manages the whole Assiniboine district, or the "Upper Red River" as it is sometimes still called, with headquarters at Fort Esperance, built nearly ten years ago by Robert Grant, a short distance up the Qu'Appelle. His chief clerk, also with us, is "Big John" McDonnell, an older brother of the first governor of the Selkirk colony of eighteen years later, Miles McDonnell.

McDonnell, whose journal (1) of the trip we have before us, has little to say of "The Forks" in 1793, except that "this place is a favorite Indian encampment." No word of occupied posts, though "the remains of several old posts still are to be seen, some of which were built as far back as the time of the French Government."

Up the Assiniboine, "half a day's march for the canoes" brings us to a "buffalo ford" about where St. Charles Church is now. Then—"All along the Assiniboine River may be

seen the vestiges of many commercial establishments, several of which claim an ancient date. Blondishe's Fort is the first we come to. Next to it Fort la Reine, according to some, but others say Fort la Reine stood at the Portage la Prairie." Adhemar's Fort, built by Jacques Adhemar, which must have been near the present High Bluff, is passed, and we reach Portage la Prairie, "so called by the Indians time out of mind." It is fifty-five years since La Verandrye



Map of Manitoba Showing Chief Centres of Early Trade

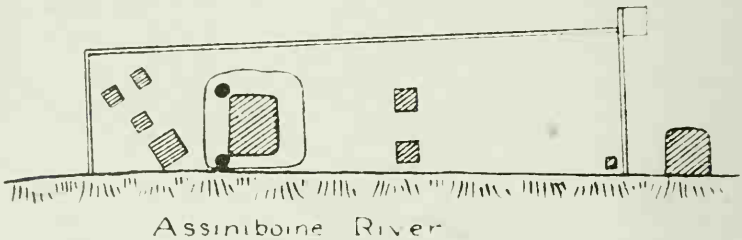
(The legend in the Dauphin area should read as applicable to both circles "Various Forts Dauphin 1741-1875." The very first Fort Dauphin was almost certainly within the upper circle).

built here his Fort la Reine, about which, even so soon as 1793, the site, as we see, is in dispute. No mention is made of newer posts, but the following winter (1794-5) there were at least four "oppositions", William McKay for the North-West, Linklater for the Hudson's Bay, and two others.

"Three leagues above Portage la Prairie stood le Fort des Trembles or Poplar Fort"—what was left of it; ill-fated, scarcely built three years ago before stained with the blood of two whites and seven attacking Indians, then abandoned. Beyond this, an extensive poplar forest, "la Grande Trembliere," and after this Pine Fort.

THE PINE FORT

Pine Fort, or Fort des Epinettes, or Fort Epinette, or Fort des Pins, or Pine House, was situated on the north or right bank of the Assiniboine, about fifteen miles, as the crow flies, below the junction of the Souris with the Assiniboine, and more than twice as far by the windings of the river. Its situation may be described in modern terms as on the North-east quarter of Section 36, Township 8, Range 14 West; that is, nearly a mile north-west of the ferry on the Glenboro-Carberry road and about twelve miles north of Glenboro. David Thompson's map (1798) shows it on the west side of Epinette, or Wattap (or Watap or Watape) Creek. It is about a mile and a half west of the mouth of what is still called Pine Creek, and just beside a small stream of beautiful clear spring water that oozes out of the banks and ripples and cascades down to the river—called, I believe, Mindy's Stream. In July, 1890, J. B. Tyrrell (2), found in the half of the fort site then left from the ravages of the river, but since



WHAT THE RIVER HAD LEFT IN 1890. SKETCH PLAN OF SITE OF FORT EPINETTE, OR PINE FORT, MADE BY MR. J. B. TYRRELL

washed away, trace of stockades and bastions, even butts of some of the posts, cellars, some house timber, and a mound which marked the place a chimney had occupied. The north side was 56 paces long. Mr. Snart, present owner of the land, recently found, washed out of the river bank, some human bones and a copper "kettle" of the old trade type. (See Appendix III.)

Landing from the river in 1793, and climbing to the half-dozen log houses within palisades and guarded by bastions, looking forward across the river and back to hills fringed with evergreens, our first impression would have been one of beauty and tranquility. Even the yellow dunes of the Devil's Hills, where, as the Indians believe, evil spirits keep the sand forever moving, so that nothing can grow, is a pleasant touch of color and not at all disquieting at this distance.

Pine Fort had several natural advantages. In 1738 La Verendrye (3) did not dare to go farther up river than the Prairie Portage, and felt unsafe even there, because "we ran great risk of so injuring our canoes that we should not be able to get them out, the place in which we were being

one in which neither gum nor resin was to be had for mending them." But here, had he known, just a few miles higher up, were birch bark and spruce gum, while spruce rootlets, and ground juniper rootlets also, furnished in plenty the wattap with which the bark was laced on the canoes.

When we had inspected the storehouse and the trading room, and glanced at the daily entries in the journal, we would have realized that Pine Fort was a place of some importance. It had not only half the Assiniboine trade, sharing it with Fort Esperance, but one region all its own, the Missouri, where the village-dwelling, land-cultivating Mandans, Arikaras and Hidatsas or Gros Ventres, had corn and dried squash to exchange for white man's commodities. Pine Fort was the first northern terminus of the Assiniboine-Missouri trade route, which was of considerable interest and importance in its day. Peter Pond in 1790 notes (4) that "Upon the branches of the Missury live the Maundiens (Mandans), who bring to our factory at Fort Epinett on the Assinipoil River Indian corn for sale. Our people go to them with loaded horses in twelve days."

So fared Pine Fort from its founding in 1785 until 1793, with its copper kettles and guns, its beads and tobacco, high wines and peltries, its wattap digging, buffalo hunting, pemmican making, its seasons of plenty and of famine and occasional alarms, its up-stream autumn brigades with goods, its down-stream, spring-time brigades with fur packs, and its trade with the fickle agriculturists of the Missouri.

A NEW CENTRE AT THE SOURIS-MOUTH

In the fall of 1793 the monopoly in the Souris-mouth area was broken. A "free trader", Ronald Cameron, went thirty-five miles farther up river to intercept the Indians on their way down. Such an advance was always followed by other traders, in a fairly friendly spirit, if possible, but followed anyway. So "Bourgeois" Grant sent "Old Auge" to trade "alongside with Mr. Ronald Cameron at Riviere la Souris." (1) Mr. Ronald Cameron and Old Auge were barely settled, if indeed they were settled, when Mr. Donald McKay, otherwise known as "Mad" McKay, arrived also, with goods in canoes, and also, for the first time, along the Assiniboine, in York boats, to represent the Hudson's Bay Company. The records of the Company (5) show that the foundations of the new post were laid on Oct. 16, 1793, and at five the same afternoon it was "baptized Brandon House." Just which of the half dozen Old Country Brandons it commemorates depends upon which was "home" to some one in the party of builders. An attempt that has been made to identify it with a certain Brandon which belonged to cousins of Lord Selkirk is, of course, an anachronism—seventeen years or more ahead of time.

Just where this first temporary post was we do not know, but there being no proof or suggestion to the contrary it is most likely that it was at the site on the north bank of the Assiniboine, six miles above the Souris mouth, where we know Brandon House was situated later. This in all probability, with the exception of 1818-1821, was the Brandon House site from 1793 to 1824.

"Old Auge," the North-westers' trader at the new centre, knew more about Indians and peltries and canoes than books and bookkeeping, so a little later a "free trader" who drifted in from the Missouri, "old Robert Taylor," was hired for the winter for sixty dollars and sent from Fort Esperance to Riviere la Souris "to write for Auge"; that is, to keep the books.

Pine Fort was still for this winter the Souris district headquarters, and in January, 1794, sent to the bourgeois at Fort Esperance (1):

4 rolls Brazil tobacco, 1 roll Spencer's twist, 1 keg powder, 3 sacks balls, 2 bales goods, 3 kegs high wines, 8 lbs. vermillion, 6 bunches blue beads, 3 laced capots, 3 capots of 4 ells, 2 ditto, 3½, 1 ditto 3 ells, and 5 blankets 2½ pts.

In the spring of 1794, when the brigade came down river with Bourgeois Grant and Chief Clerk McDonnell in charge, old Auge was found to have traded in forty-three packs. But all had not gone smoothly, as Chief Clerk McDonnell's journal (1) shows:

> "May 6, 1794, arrived at Auge's River la Souris Fort; sun an hour high. Auge has sad complaints against his H.B. opponent, Mr. Donald, alias "Mad" McKay . . .
>
> "By order of Mr. Grant I took down three or four or five declarations of his own men against Mr. Donald McKay, in consequence of which we took him prisoner for firing at Auge and laying in ambush for his life. I was his guard and slept with him at night.
>
> "Mr. Grant allowed Mr. McKay, *le malin*, to go home, seal his journal and write to his chief, Mr. McNabb. I went with him and, according to his promise, he came back quietly with me . . . Finished marking Auge's packs 43.
>
> "Left River la Souris after breakfast with 14 canoes and 3 boats. Mr. Grant thought proper to release Mr. Donald McKay, so we did not embark him, and he was so pleased with recovering his liberty that it was at his house we breakfasted by his particular request."

When this happy consummation had been reached at the Souris the brigade dropped down stream to Pine Fort, where three days were spent making up the packs, laying in also a stock of gum and wattap, and putting everything in

order for the long journey to the Grand Portage. An end must come to all things. These were the last fur packs from the old Pine Fort. "Poor old Jos. Duchesne, alias Pirouguelon, cried for sorrow at parting with Mr. Grant." (1) It had doubtless been a pleasant old place.

Mr. McDonnell tells us why the fort must be abandoned. (1) "The Pine Fort, the lowest post the North West Company had on the Assiniboine River, we were obliged to abandon in the year 1794 as the Honorable Hudson's Bay Company and other new comers had settled the year before at River la Souris, about seven leagues by land higher up the river, and three days' travelling for the craft by water, the posts being too near, as we had placed ourselves alongside of the others at the above mentioned new station."

When Daniel Harman (8) passed by the abandoned post on the first day of June, 1805, it was "twenty years since this post was built and eleven since it was abandoned." When David Thompson (2) left Assiniboine House, then in charge of our John McDonnell, on the 26th of February, 1798, he made his camp the first night beside the abandoned Pine Fort. His notes (not journal) state that it had been forsaken several years. Alexander Henry, the younger, passing westward that way on July 12th, 1806, writes (6), "At one o'clock we crossed Wattap River and came to old Fort des Epinettes, where we stopped to refresh ourselves and rest our horses. Here we had an establishment for several years, but from the scarcity of wood, provisions, and other circumstances, it was abandoned, and built higher up river, where the settlement is now at Riviere la Souris." As will be pointed out later, there is reason to believe that the Pine Fort was re-established by Larocque in 1807, though continued likely for a short time only.

To the Souris mouth, then, in the fall of 1793, came Ronald Cameron to trade with the Indians. Auge for the North-westers "placed himself alongside" Cameron, and Mr. Donald, or "Mad" McKay joined them to represent the Hudson's Bay company. Next year, 1794-95, McDonnell tells us, "there were five different oppositions working against one another." Of these the North West Company stayed in the district until the amalgamation in 1821, and the Hudson's Bay until 1832. The North-Westers had three posts in all at different periods: Pine Fort. 1785-1794; a second, Assiniboine House, on the north bank of the Assiniboine, 1793-1804 or 5; and a third, usually referred to as La Souris, on the south bank, 1804 or 5 to 1807, likely to 1821; also possibly Pine Fort re-established 1807.

Just what the Hudson's Bay Company had is more difficult to decide. If it were not for one Peter Fidler, surveyor (5), who mapped and described the district for the Company in 1819, we would have definite records of just two Brandon Houses, one on the north side of the Assiniboine, six miles above the Souris mouth, built in 1793, and finally abandoned in 1824, and another, twelve miles farther up, also on the north side, built in 1828 and occupied until 1832. But Peter's map and report, and his official surveyorship, cannot be so easily passed over. Even a man who makes not a single stop in the full career of several pages of manuscript, and who points his map south rather than the orthodox north, would scarcely miss anything so large as a river, or make it flow uphill. Briefly, all records, references and maps, some of them most emphatic, place Brandon House north of the river from 1793 to 1818; Fidler (5) has it on the south side in 1819; Chief Factor McDonald (5) has it north again in 1822-23; we know there was no occupied fort, north or south, 1824-1828 (5), and that a new fort built in 1828 was again on the north side (5). A temporary move from north to south before 1819, and back again before 1822-23, clears up the difficulty, and for such a move we think both proof and reasons can be found, which will be discussed with their proper period. Meanwhile, our concern is with the Hudson's Bay Company's Brandon House the first, six miles west of the Souris-mouth and on the north bank of the Assiniboine, and with Assiniboine House of the North-Westers, nearly two miles west of the Souris mouth, also on the north side.

What can be seen now, more than a century after, of these old posts? Many trading "houses" and forts" of importance in their day, and great names even yet, were little more than temporary log huts, and the best of them were only collections of huts, with some protection by a stockade and perhaps two bastions at diagonal corners. Away from the Bay the Forts Garry, Upper and Lower, were the only forts of stone or part stone in the whole West. After a few years of exposure little could have been left of log buildings, even without the almost inevitable fire. The only marks now left are in the earth, hollows where their cellars were and where earth was thrown up to make bastion mounds, with here and there a pile of stones where a chimney stood, or an oven. Bastions may be traced by the hollows excavated outside them, and perhaps a faint furrow followed between bastions where the wooden stockade ran. Gateway traces may be found. Usually marks, apart from cellars, are very few, and only with much study can a general plan be reconstructed. Digging turns up charred wood, innumerable buffalo bones, well picked by many a hungry trader or post pensioner or hanger-on, and baked chinks of clay, once plastered between logs—which stopped a hole to keep the wind away.

The whole site is grown up with rank grass and usually burrowed by badgers. When it has been cultivated, even the cellars vanish before the plow in a few seasons, leaving little trace but streaks of clay in the darker loam. Photographs from the air of all these old sites would be of interest, and possibly of value.

In the Souris-mouth district the banks of the Assiniboine are rough and pretty much untilled, so the sites are unusually well preserved. The site of the first Brandon House is very well marked. Thirty-one years of even interrupted occupation should leave some physical impression. It is in an open space of two or three acres in wooded country.

Logs in the More-than-Century Old Corduroy Road Near the First Brandon House

There are still cleared lanes through the woods, only partly grown up, where paths lay to the little creek which was the water supply, and to the river landing place. The large garden, which possibly also had its stockade, can be outlined, and parsnips growing profusely in the woods may be escapes from it. Down the slope and among the trees are several graves.

There is one special feature not found elsewhere. The fort lay between the river and a considerable muskeg parallel to the river. In 1793, when the fort was built, all traffic was by river, and the muskeg was no great disadvantage, perhaps was even looked upon as a protection, but before 1824, when the site was finally abandoned, horse and cart had largely superseded the canoe. The solution of the difficulty was a corduroy road across the muskeg, built not later than 1822, when this site was reoccupied after an in-

terval, by the combined companies. This road can still be followed—with care—and some of the logs are fairly sound, more than a century after they were put in place.

In the Hudson's Bay archives there are fairly continuous journals of this old outpost, mostly details of the day's work, it is true, yet out of these, and the records of rivals, such as Henry's Journal, a very fair reconstruction of the life of the day can be made. When it was opened there were three "oppositions" at the Souris, the North-Westers and Ronald Cameron, besides the "English" or Hudson's Bay Company. The following winter these had increased to five, according to McDonnell, though on Jan. 6, 1795, Robert Goodwin writes: (5) "We are four houses here and very little made at any of them yet." He would send a man higher up to oppose the North-West at Montagne a la Bosse if only he had one he could trust. "There is now upwards of twenty houses in this river only." James Sutherland, writing afterwards, is authority for the statement that almost in its first year, in 1794, the post was attacked by Mandan Indians. On April 23, 1797, Sutherland (5) writes: "Performed divine service I believe for the first time at Brandon House with one of Tillotson's sermons, which, however, is not fit for this country."

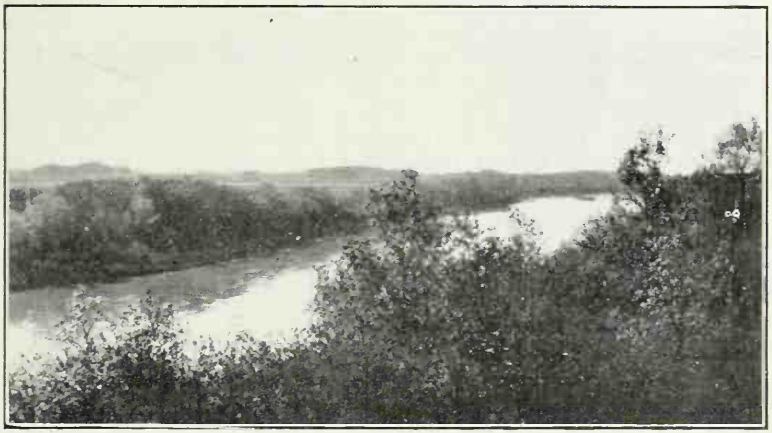
Such were the beginnings of Brandon House, on the north bank of the Assiniboine, nearly six miles in a direct line and perhaps seven or more by river above the mouth of the Souris. The site is well marked but difficult to reach, and is on the north-east quarter of Section 35, Township 8, Range 17 west.

ASSINIBOINE HOUSE, FORT ASSINIBOINE OR McDONNELL'S HOUSE

The year before Pine Fort was abandoned, that is in 1793, the second post of the North-West Company in this district was founded by "Old Auge" on the north side of the Assiniboine, two miles or more above the mouth of the Souris and three or more below its chief rival, Brandon House, and was occupied until 1804, or 1805. It was variously named Fort Assiniboine, Assiniboine House, Stone Indian River House, or referred to simply by location as Riviere or River la Souris. David Thompson honors his host in 1797-98, our friend "Big John" McDonnell, by calling it McDonnell's House. Its site on the north-east quarter of Section 19, Township 8, Range 16 west, and six miles north-west of Wawanesa, is almost as impressive and as well preserved as that of old Brandon House.

One big event in its history was the visit of David Thompson. After twelve years with the Hudson's Bay Company, with little encouragement at York Factory for his enthusiasm in exploration and mapping of the country, though

London approved, David Thompson, twenty-seven years of age, in 1797 left the older company, journeyed to the Grand Portage, joined the North-West company and, as astronomer, geographer and explorer, set out to clean up a few problems in geography. Proceeding first to the Swan River, he explored and mapped it to its source, mapped also the smaller Red Deer River, then crossed to the Assiniboine. Travelling and mapping, (2) "We proceeded down the Stone Indian River (Assiniboine) to the house in charge of Mr. John McDonnell in Lat. 49.40.56 N. and Longitude 99.27.15 W.," arriving on Nov. 15 or 16, 1797. "We remained with John McDonnell twelve days; in which time I put my journal surveys and sketches of the countries that were in black lead into ink; and having sealed them up directed them to the agents of the North-West Company."



What the North-westers Saw Up-stream from Assiniboine House

From the Souris Thompson travelled to the Missouri. The Mandans and Gros Ventres were different from other Indians, so attracted travellers; they were keen traders, so attracted trade, but the chief purpose of the Geographer of the North-West Company, released for one year from trade, was to determine the exact longitude and latitude of the Missouri at its farthest north, to settle a question in both geography and politics and, incidentally, map the Souris also. The storms of winter were nothing to him. With a considerable party of traders, though he himself was not trading, on Nov. 28, 1797, he set out for the Mandan country. "We crossed the Stone Indian River on the ice . . . we went about six miles and put up in the woods of the Mouse River." Here, in the Souris Valley, about where the town of Wawanesa is now, they were storm-stayed until they struggled out and on their way on Dec. 4, 1797. The adventures of that

whole trip should be better known. David Thompson is quite as much an explorer of Manitoba, chiefly our North, as of British Columbia.

Returning, "On the third day of February (1798) we arrived at the trading house of the North-West Company, from whence we set out, thankful to the Almighty for our merciful preservation. We have been absent sixty-eight days. My time for three full weeks was employed in calculating the astronomical observations made to and from the Missourie River; and making a map of my survey which, with my journal, was sealed up and directed to the agents of the N. W. Co. On the 26th day of February (1798) I took leave of my hospitable friend, Mr. John McDonnell, who furnished me with everything necessary for my long journey of survey."

At Assiniboine House, therefore, David Thompson spent twelve days on journals and maps of the exploration of Swan River and upper Assiniboine and 23 days on journals of the Mandan visit and maps of the Souris and Missouri. Add to this the six days storm-stayed in the valley at Wawanesa and it will be seen that this very great explorer, surveyor and astronomer spent in all forty-one days in and about Fort Assiniboine in 1797-1798.

The site of this post, visited in 1890 by Tyrrell (2), is still in 1930 quite easy to make out, with it cellars, its burned clay log chinks and tumbled-down chimney stones. There is still a space of two acres clear of trees—a high dry knoll sloping and terracing down to the river. Seen in the glory of the level rays of a summer evening sun, we can well believe that the rough men who lived in it for eleven years could become deeply attached to it. (See Appendix III.)

THE X-Y COMPANY

Among the boisterous, individualistic traders from Montreal, loosely federated about 1783 into the North-West Company, a lasting peace and accord was too much to expect. Two factions arose, roughly, eastern and western. The westerners resented the arbitrary, domineering manner and the sharp critical letters of the dominating partner, Simon McTavish. They had more confidence in Alexander Mackenzie, himself a "wintering partner" who had followed "Mackenzie's River" to the Frozen Sea in 1789 and, in spite of what would have been for any other man utter impossibilities, reached the Pacific in 1793. In 1795 a few partners broke away from the company, having the financial backing of Forsyth, Richardson & Co. Mackenzie, though in sympathy with the movement and afterwards its leader, was still until 1798, according to contract, a member of the old company. His account of the change reads tamely enough. (11)

"In 1798 the concern underwent a new form . . . The period was the termination of the company which was not renewed by all the parties concerned in it, the majority continuing to act on the old stock and under the old firm: the others beginning a new one."

It was in reality no such peaceful matter of accounting but a quarrel, a quarrel between dominating personalities, a family quarrel, and of all the trade rivalries the bitterest while it lasted. "The North-West Company," says Harmon, "look upon the X-Y company as encroachers upon their territories." This was putting the matter very mildly.

The new concern was variously called Forsythe, Richardson & Co., Sir Alexander Mackenzie & Co., the New North-West Company, the little Company, Les Petits, or "The Potties" (a corruption of either Les Petits or of *potee*, colloquially a "potful," or "family," or "bunch") but usually called the X-Y Company. The original company was known as the Old North-West Company, McTavish, Frobisher & Co., or the Big Company.

With most others, the Souris district was invaded by the new off-shoot—just when we do not know, but likely at the beginning of the fur season of 1798-99; that is, in the fall of 1798. Among these old fur traders the keener the rivalry the nearer were the rival houses. The X-Y Company made their stand on the south side of the river, opposite the Assiniboine House of the older company and so near it that every movement could be watched. We have our choice of two sites opposite Assiniboine House, the two, indeed all three, being in the same quarter section.

The smaller of the two, and quite likely the X-Y site, is on "Brown's farm," beside a beautiful creek which here joins the Assiniboine. Although most of the site is now cropped land, there are still to be seen two or three cellars, a mound where a stone chimney collapsed, and a pathway which may or may not be as old as the fort, down through the woods to the river. Dr. Bryce reported in 1886 that "The site is grown over with great weeds and underbrush, but the stockade would seem to have been about 150 feet by 66 feet. Four cellars and a chimney are still traceable on the site." (See also Appendix III.)

The other and larger site, which may have been that of the X-Y post, Fort Souris, but more likely the "la Souris" occupied by the North-West Company 1804 or 5 to 1807 or 1821, Dr. Bryce visited also. It is on the farm of Mr. George Mair, who has occupied the land since 1879. Unfortunately three of the six cellars which were well marked in 1886, have been plowed in and are part of a field. The stockade line, which then was clearly marked, is now obliterated, but three cellars saved from the plow remain. The outline of the stockade, Dr.

Bryce tells us, "was 155 feet on the north and 124 feet on the east side, which faced the river. The gate space, ten feet wide—had beside it the outline of a watch tower, and the inner space showed remains of six houses, the largest being 64 feet by 16 feet." These dimensions and the distinctness with which the stockade and houses could be outlined at that early day are corroborated by Mr. Mair. (See Appendix III.)

Here then, across the river from one another but within sight and earshot, the rivals watched, twitted and outwitted one another, paying little attention in the meantime to the Hudson's Bay Company farther up the river.

In the spring of 1804 this obstinate opposition and ruinous rivalry was still changing profits into losses, and likely to last indefinitely, to the disadvantage of both parties, and

HERE THE "X-Y" TRADERS FILLED THEIR KETTLES

the advantage of the Hudson's Bay Company. In July 1804, however, the chief cause of disunion was removed when old Simon McTavish died. Steps were at once taken to bring the two companies together, and on November 5th, 1804, they were reunited. Word of the amalgamation had reached the Souris by February 1805, for Larocque heard it when he arrived here in that month, and at Fort Alexandria, near where Kamsack is now, Daniel Harmon had the news by February 8th. The Souris posts of the amalgamated Companies were still separate, however, when Harmon visited them in May 1805. "Here are," he states, "three establishments formed severally by the North-West, X-Y, and Hudson's Bay Companies." The people of the "other two forts" attended a dance in Harmon's honor.

It is not improbable that in the fall of 1804, when the amalgamation was certain to come but not yet consummated, the North-Westers may have abandoned Assiniboine House and built a new one better fitted than either of the older ones for the combined trade. Or the new may have been an auxiliary to the nearby X-Y post, both being occupied. Or the move across the river may have been made after all directions about amalgamation reached the west, some time in 1805. We are not sure whether the North-Westers spent the winter 1804-5 on the north side or in the new house on the South, but the winter of 1805-6 was almost certainly spent in the new house. They thus occupied successively Pine Fort 1785-1794, Assiniboine House 1793-1804 or 5, and the new post, usually called Riviere la Souris, from the fall of 1804 or 5 to 1807 and likely to 1821, the time of the amalgamation with the Hudson's Bay Company, after the death of another dominating personality, Lord Selkirk.

THE NORTH-WEST POST LA SOURIS

It was likely at the new North-West fort on the south side of the river, but perhaps still at the old on the north side, at "Riviere a la Souris, or Mouse River," "about fifty miles from Montagne a la Bosse" (Virden), that Daniel Harmon, a New Englander turned fur trader, arrived, on Monday, May 27, 1805, from Fort Alexandria (Kamsack), on his way down river with packs. He was duly entertained in the manner of the country. (8).

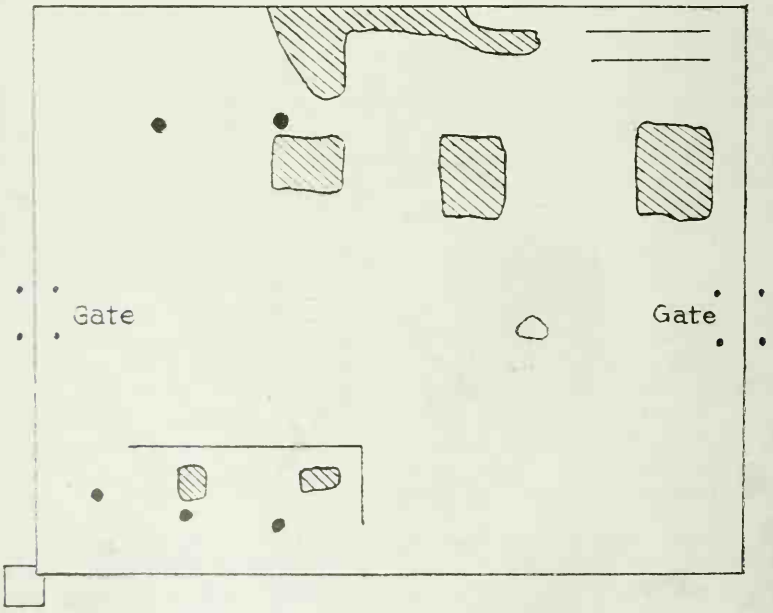
> "Last evening Mr. Chaboillez (Manager N.-W. Co.) invited the people of the other two forts to a dance; and we had a real North-West country ball. When three-fourths of the people had drunk so much as to be incapable of walking straight the other fourth thought it was time to put an end to the ball, or rather bawl. This morning we were invited to breakfast at the Hudson's Bay House with a Mr. McKay and in the evening to a dance. This, however, ended more decently than the one of the preceding evening."

The next paragraph of Harmon's journal shows that even as late as 1805 some trace remained of the French occupation of the Assiniboine Valley—with headquarters at Fort la Reine (Portage la Prairie).

> "It is now more than fifty years since a French Missionary left this place (Souris-mouth district). He had, as I am informed, resided here during a number of years for the purpose of instructing the natives in the Christian religion. He taught them some short prayers in the French language, the whole of which some of them have not yet forgotten."

Alexander Henry, the Younger, who was a sort of supervisor of the Red and Assiniboine River districts for the North-West Company, with headquarters at Pembina, determined in 1806 to visit the interesting Mandan people on the Missouri, and came all the way from Pembina on horseback by way of Portage la Prairie and the Assiniboine trail in order to make his start from the recognized base of the Mandan trade, the Souris-mouth posts. Among the writers of early journals he is the Samuel Pepys, and his pages give us the best, the most and the broadest of the gossip of the day (6).

> "July 12, 1806. Arrived opposite our new establishment of Riviere la Souris which is situated on the south side of the Assiniboine. I was, therefore, under the necessity of applying to the H. B. Co. people to *ferry us over*, which they very willingly did. Their fort stands on the north side where also ours formerly stood. The gentlemen of the N. W. Co. are so fond of shifting their buildings that a place is scarcely settled before it is thrown up and planted elsewhere."



Fort La Souris in 1890. Sketch Plan made by Mr. J. B. Tyrrell of Trading Post Site on Mair's Farm

Henry had been at the Souris at least twice before; once in February and March 1800, when he found only two buffalo bulls between Montagne a la Bosse and the Qu'Appelle, and "Hunger! was the general cry at our establishments along the Assiniboine." In January 1803 he tramped across Hair Hills (Pembina Mountain) on snow shoes, with

dogs and cariole from Pembina, "two days to Cadotte's House, thence four days to Riviere la Souris, thence north for three days to the foot of Fort Dauphin Mountain." Both these visits had been at Assiniboine House. In July 1806 it was at the new House on the south side.

What he found at the two rival Souris-mouth posts in July 1806 we may let him tell us.

> "The H. B. Co. people were busily employed making hair lines with which they fetter their horses; they perform this work with great expedition and very neatly the same way that rope is made. The hair they commonly use is that which buffaloes have between the horns, and which is sometimes upwards of a foot long. They also use horsehair which is much stronger than buffalo's. Indians are also expert and ingenious in making these hair lines, but their work is slow and tedious in comparison to the English make."

Having been ferried over to "our fort," Henry found Mr. F. A. Larocque in charge temporarily while his chief, Monsieur Jean Baptiste Chaboillez, was away with the brigade to Fort William.

> "There are here," he writes, "three laboring men, an Assiniboine interpreter, and forty women and children, almost starving. There are no buffalo in these parts at present and they have finished what pemmican was left here last spring. No trade of any kind is going forward; the Indians have been away since June 1st and they are not expected back before the arrival of the canoes. This evening their hunter came in from the Moose Head hills [Brandon Hills]; he brought two red deer which certainly was a seasonable supply for us. Everything here bore the aspect of distress and desolation."

Conditions were not much better a month later when Henry arrived back from his Mandan visit. It is true he found "A wash, shave and change of linen very acceptable," as he had "worn the same shirt since leaving Pembian River and it was not entirely free from vermin." He "went to sleep in clean blankets on a soft feather bed, and only those who have experienced like hardships can form any idea of my delightful repose." Yet, as before—

> "This establishment is now in a miserable condition: they have neither flesh nor fish—nothing but some old musty beat meat, and no grease. They have had but 14 animals including cabbrie since the departure of the canoes in May last, and a few bags of pemmican—a mere trifle for 3 clerks, 1 interpreter, 3 laboring men, and 47 women and children, or 54 people entitled to regular rations.

"The men are now employed in making hay for the winter for such horses as are stabled to do the necessary work at the fort, hauling firewood, etc. They have to mow knee deep in the water while another man follows with a cart and carries the grass to the high ground where it is spread out to dry. There has been no trade whatever this summer. The Indians are starving all over the country, no buffalo being found within their limits. There are a few freemen about the place who have actually disposed of their women and clothing to the H. B. Co.'s people in barter for beat meat."

All this is quite pessimistic, but this Mandan trip had been a rather grouchy one all the way through for Henry. Nothing pleased him, least of all at the Missouri. He admits that the mosquitoes were not troublesome at the Souris fort, "But the common house fly supplies their place. The buildings are full of them." A day later, when rafting his belongings across the swollen waters of Cypress River, he completely changed his mind about the dearth of mosquitoes.

"The mosquitoes were intolerable, and as we were obliged to remain naked for about four hours, we suffered more than I can describe. Every time I landed the mosquitoes plagued me insufferably and still worse my horse was so tormented that he broke his fetters and ran away. I was under the cruel necessity of pursuing him in the plains entirely naked."

Certainly worse than house flies.

How long was this site south of the Assiniboine occupied as La Souris post by the North-West Company? It was so occupied without doubt at the time of the "Pemmican War" in 1814 and later, but Larocque (10) raises some doubt about continuous occupation. He is mentioned by Henry (6) and other journalists as having been temporarily in charge of La Souris in 1806 and, as his journal shows, spent there the following winter of 1806-7 with Mr. Lamoth as clerk. "I passed a very agreeable winter during which I had nothing very remarkable to report. I visited the tents of the savages twice during that winter and I spent the rest of the time in reading, for there were many books at that place."

The farther note which raises questions about the post La Souris follows:—

"In May (1807) I had the house demolished, also the store buildings which were not absolutely necessary, and had them transported on rafts to a place named Pine Fort (name of an old fort which was founded there in the days of Mr. Robert Grant), situated approximately thirteen miles down the river, conforming to Mr. J. McDonnell's instructions, who had decided to con-

struct a fort at this place and to demolish the one in which I had spent the winter. I employed all the men that I could spare to rebuild the store buildings and, when I left that place, everything had been transported to the new fort and put under shelter. . . . I left Pine Fort the 3rd of June in company of Mr. Charles McKenzie and embarked with Mr. McDonnell to go to Kaministiquia, having the brigade with us."

As has been stated, the North-West Company certainly had a post near the Souris and on the south side of the Assiniboine, in charge of John Pritchard, in 1814. The reunion of the X-Y Company with the main North-West Company in 1804 left the company with two posts less than half a mile apart. Presumably one of these posts only, "store buildings which were not absolutely necessary," was moved down the river, leaving the other still occupied part time or full time. How long the rebuilt Pine Fort lasted we do not know, but likely not long, as it was contrary to the principles of the trade of that day to have two posts of one company so near as thirteen miles or two rival posts so far apart. They were likely both used part time for a few years and then the Pine Fort finally dropped.

Jean Baptiste Chaboillez was succeeded at Fort la Souris by de Rocheblave, and Mr. Falcon was in charge later until his death when he was succeeded by Pritchard who was destined to live through a stormy time.

With such ups and downs days were filled in the rival posts, with seasons of plenty and times of famine, with hair lines to make, horses to guard, chimneys to build, firewood to collect, hay to put up, buffalo to hunt, implements to forge, pemmican bags to sew and pemmican to make, carts to build, furs to trade in and goods to trade out, Indians to watch and bribe with fire water of various degrees of dilution, always to humor and often to feed and care for, forts occasionally to build or rebuild (and a good fort such as Henry built on the Red River in what is now Dakota needed more than three thousand oak timbers) ; canoes to repair (though gradually the canoe along the Assiniboine gave place to the horse and cart) ; buildings to plaster and whitewash with clay, the household to feed, furs to press into bales, reports to write, the yearly brigade to send out and welcome back again, the Missouri trade to develop. Indeed, days were busy enough, summer and winter, for North-Westers and Hudson's Bay people, but the chief duty was to keep watchful eyes on one another, to live on terms half neighborly and half hostile, to entertain one another occasionally but also circumvent one another when possible, or, as John McDonald of Garth "Bras croche" put it, "To oppose the opposition with all our might, and with as little expense as possible."

THE PEMMICAN WAR

In the year 1811 great things happened. In February of that year a visionary Scotchman, Thomas Douglas, the fifth Lord Selkirk, presented to the Hudson's Bay Company, in which he had a large interest, his scheme for a colony at the Red River. Over a written protest by a few members of the Company, but approved at a general court held in May 1811, a veritable empire of land, 116,000 square miles of what is now Manitoba, Dakota and Minnesota, was sold to Lord Selkirk, and became absolutely the property of himself, his heirs, etc., in consideration of the sum of ten shillings lawful money and certain obligations toward the Company, including the bringing out of settlers. In June of the same year the Hudson's Bay Company ships "Prince of Wales," "Eddystone" and the "Edward and Anne," sailed with colonists, some of whom reached "The Forks" of the Red River about the end of August of the next year, where they were met by men from Brandon House, and camped with them on what is now the St. Boniface side of the river, opposite the mouth of the Assiniboine. This party was under command of the Governor of the new colony, Miles McDonnell, a younger brother of "Big John" McDonnell, North-West wintering partner at Assiniboine House, and host to David Thompson. Miles was not only in the opposite political camp from his brother. He was a very different man from Big John, who "Bras croche" McDonald says was "an easy man of no exertion," and "did not command his men as he ought."

With the intrusion of these settlers into a fur domain, the old and new rivalries soon became enmities. To Lord Selkirk in Scotland, who had never set foot on Red River soil, and even more to his peppery representative at the Red River, there was no shadow of doubt that a bit of paper signed in London gave these non-residents and newcomers right, title and authority in a wide region even over men who had explored it, and toiled, traded and starved in it for nearly half a century.

That the individualistic North-Westers would accept such a situation calmly was not for a moment to be expected. Even the Hudson's Bay men, though formally allied to Selkirk and his schemes, resented the intrusion of his colonists and, to say the least, gave them no encouragement.

The first open rupture came in 1814, with the proclamation issued by McDonnell as Governor that throughout the whole 116,000 square miles of the Selkirkian empire, food, that was pemmican, must not be taken out of the territory. "The first blow aimed at the North-West Company was the seizure of their depot of provisions in the Red River country," [Wilcocke (9)]; that is the Assiniboine, which was still at this time frequently called the Red.

The Assiniboine posts were in good buffalo country and were main sources of food supply for the two Companies. Though Henry found them lacking in 1806, two hundred and seventy-five taureau of pemmican were shipped in 1794 from Fort Esperance, near the mouth of the Qu'Appelle, alone. In 1797 or thereabout, John McDonnell, brother of the belligerant Miles, in spite of occasional temporary famines, reports that:—

> "Buffalo, moose, deer, caberie and fowl of all kinds abound in this country. . . . The country is so plentiful that the canoes have always either fresh meat or fowl in their kettles. It is at Esperance and Montagne a la Bosse (Virden) that most of the Red River provisions have been procured, being both Assiniboil posts, provisions are their chief returns."

The proclamation interfered with the distribution of what was both a staple product and a prime necessity. The Assiniboine Valley was the pemmican area and the two Souris-mouth posts, Brandon House of the Hudson's Bay Company on the north side, and Fort la Souris of the North-Westers on the south side, soon found themselves precipitated into the "Pemmican War". Some time after the proclamation was issued the "Governor" sent the Surgeon Holdsworth to Brandon House with a copy to be nailed to the door of the North-Westers' post. Holdsworth is said to have used "great propriety and judgment" when he crossed the river to perform this doubtless unpleasant duty.

But "the trade in pemmican went briskly on" (7), and "the tradesmen found ready means of turning their kinsmen and customers (the half-breeds) into allies, with fatal results to the colony." (7).

> "In May a party of voyageurs was bringing a boat-load of provisions down the Assiniboine when word was sent from the Forks that preparations were being made to stop them. The pemmican was cached, the boat turned adrift and the sheriff found ninety-six bales of pemmican only after some days of humiliating search."

The main supplies came down the Assiniboine to the North-West Souris-mouth fort where they were lodged for safety. But—

> "The sheriff (Spencer) with Howse, a Hudson's Bay trader, and three men from the (Red River) settlement appeared before the gate of the North-West fort, la Souris, and demanded entrance of John Pritchard who was in charge. Pritchard refused to obey the warrant and bolted the gate. Spencer cut out three pickets of

the stockade and drew the staples in the hangard doors. More than 400 bags of pemmican were seized, part taken across the river to Brandon House, the Hudson's Bay post, for safe keeping; the rest went down the Assiniboine to Fort Douglas, escorted past (the North-West) Fort Gibraltar by a force from the settlement."

Throughout the whole trouble which followed, the two rival Souris-mouth posts were in the middle of things. Early in May, 1816, Cuthbert Grant surprised a Hudson's Bay brigade of six bateaux descending the Assiniboine from Qu'-Appelle toward Fort Douglas, laden wth furs and provisions. "The half-breeds lay in ambush at the end of a portage, carried off one or two of the Hudson's Bay men as prisoners, and used the pemmican as provisions for the expedition being prepared against the settlement." "On June 1st a

The Site of the First, and Chief, Brandon House

party of forty-eight half-breeds, singing and dancing, with drums and war paint, marched to Brandon House. Doors were broken open, windows were cut out, stores were seized and carried away in great triumph. The half-breeds took even the grindstone" (7). "At Portage la Prairie reinforcements came in from outlying posts, and the expedition began to move down the river toward the settlement" (7). The tragedy to be presented at Seven Oaks had its dress rehearsal at Brandon House. Rivalry thus led to enmity, enmity to war, war to murder, and murder to litigation. Finally, after five wearisome and unprofitable years, in 1821 came amalgamation and peace.

BRANDON HOUSE MOVES ACROSS THE RIVER

As we have seen, the quarrel between Selkirk and the North-West Company involved the Hudson's Bay Company. In 1816, when Brandon House was raided and wrecked, and the affair at Seven Oaks followed a few weeks later, the half savage half-breed employees of the North-Westers were the upper dogs and the Hudson's Bay people distinctly the lower dogs in the fight. The half-breeds were turbulent, threatening, uncontrollable and, perhaps worst of all, noisy. "The Forks trail", which was not far from Brandon House, had come to be much travelled by half-breeds with horses and even carts. To the Brandon House people the south bank of the river looked peaceful by comparison, even though the house of the rival North-Westers was on that side. The records (5) show that in 1817 a good part of Brandon House was destroyed by fire. After the wrecking of 1816 and the fire of the following year, much new building was needed. This was likely the last straw. Why not move across the river, as the other company had done? So new buildings were put up in 1818, and on the south side of the river. Peter Fidler's account of these, with a few punctuation marks and parentheses added, is as follows:—

> "Brandon House (north bank) is in a ruinous state occasioned by the wabrules (halfbreeds) in 1816—A small new house was built here (south side) last summer (1818) 30 by 14 feet. There are a smith and coopers' shops, also a trading room, provisions stores and 2 stables, with houses for the men and Indians when they come to the Houses to trade." (See also Appendix II.)

If the move, as seems likely, was just across the river, what could be easier? The old gardens and even the old houses to some extent could still be used, and likely were. Indeed, Fidler speaks of Indians coming to the "Houses". This site on the south side, as has been stated already, is so near to the old Brandon House that though across the river it is actually on the same quarter-section. Both are on what is now the farm of Mr. Morgan. The south site was evidently extensively developed, so was doubtless the principal post—until the move back again was made. This site is exactly the six miles from the Souris-mouth that Peter Fidler estimated.

Brandon House, then, we conclude, was on the north side from 1793 to 1818. It was sacked and badly handled by the half-breeds in 1816 and most of what was left was burned in 1817. It was rebuilt on the south side immediately opposite, in 1818, where Fidler inspected it and reported on it in 1819. But amalgamation of the companies in 1821

settled many troubles, among them the half-breeds. More accommodation was required for the combined businesses, and handier to the cart trail, which had now altogether superseded the river for transportation. The old North-West post could be kept for south side business if necessary, and the south Indians were giving so much trouble that it was well to have the river as a barrier (Letters of Governor Simpson, 1828 to 1832 (5)). So, likely in 1821 or 1822, Brandon House moved back to the north side. Chief Factor John McDonald reported it as there in the winter of 1822-23, and there it doubtless remained until abandoned in 1824, to be refounded, but for four years only, twelve miles up the river, in 1828. Does not this clear up the vexed questions as to how many Brandon Houses there were, and where?

The report of Peter Fidler to the Hudson's Bay Company in 1819 (5) has so much in it of interest about the work of the day at Brandon House, and of the state of agriculture at that time in Manitoba, or rather Assiniboia, that it is printed in full, with the spelling and punctuation exactly according to the dictates of Peter's own heart and conscience, as an appendix. It was written at Brandon House and so has much to say about gardens and crops there, but there are many comparisons with the other three farming experiments at "Dead River" or "Riviere aux Morts" or Nettley Creek, "The Forks" now Winnipeg, and "Beaver Creek," on the Assiniboine some distance south of the mouth of the Qu'Appelle River. (See Appendix II.)

GOVERNOR SIMPSON DISCUSSES POLICIES

After the amalgamation in 1821 there was just one company, and so just one post at centres where there had been several "oppositions". Many even of the remaining Hudson's Bay posts were abandoned, or combined, in the interests of economy. In a report to his co-governor and committee in London, written at York Factory, on August 10th, 1832, Governor Simpson reviews at length the history of the Souris-mouth trade and outlines future policies (5) :

> "Previous to the coalition of the Hudson's Bay and North-West Companies there were three establishments maintained on the upper parts of Red River [Assiniboine], say Brandon House, Q'Appelle and Hibernia, But in the year 1824, it was found that the trade of Brandon House and Q'Appelle could not, in marketable produce, be made to defray the heavy expenses of those establishments altho' they shewed a nominal profit by the quantity of Buffalo undressed hides and provisions for which they took credit, altho' we had no use for such articles. The country, moreover, being exceeding poor in fur bearing animals, having been

overwrought during the opposition, it was considered advisable to allow it to recruit. With the view therefore of saving the expense occasioned by those establishments and of recruiting the country, the posts of Brandon House and Q'Appelle were abandoned in the spring of 1824, and in the autumn of the same year the establishment of Fort Pelly was formed on the site of the old post of Hibernia, for the accommodation of the plain Crees and Saulteaux of that part of the country, who had removed to Q'Appelle during the abandonment of Hibernia, also of the Crees and Saulteaux of Q'Appelle, who would otherwise have suffered much by the abandonment of that establishment, and in order to lighten the expense of Fort Pelly it was intended that it should only be maintained during the winter, as little or no benefit could arise from its being occupied throughout the summer.

"The District of Upper Red River [Assiniboine] was thus left unoccupied from the spring of 1824 until the autumn of 1828, when it was considered expedient to re-occupy the post of Brandon House during the winter as a means of protecting the trade, otherwise the Indians would have taken their hunts to the nearest market, which was that afforded by our opponents, who had recently established themselves at Pembina, and occupied the neighborhood of the Pembina and Turtle Mountains by small parties."

The decision to build the new Brandon House is recorded in an earlier report of the Governor to London, dated from York Factory, July 10th, 1828, two days before he set out "wi ae piper an' a' an' a' " accompanied by Archibald McDonald, on his tour of 1828 to the Pacific (5).

"But as a protection for that frontier (i.e., the United States frontier) we consider it advisable to re-establish the post of Brandon House on the Assiniboin River about 120 miles above the settlement (i.e., the Red River Settlement) which will accordingly be done this autumn under the charge of Chief Trader Heron, with a complement of 12 men, who are to be selected from among the Freemen and Settlers of Red River and engaged for the winter months only, as it is intended merely for a temporary post and not to be maintained throughout the year."

Chief Trader Heron's own account of the building of the new post—or at least the choice of site, and the beginning—is given in an extract from his Journal (5):

"At 10 a.m. I arrived at this station, accompanied by three men with horses and carts employed in transporting the Outfit hither from Fort Garry. The place

selected for the post is situated about twelve miles above the old Brandon House. I was prevented from fixing upon the site of the old establishment owing to the want of wood there. The situation chosen on the contrary possesses superior advantages on that score, being well stocked with timber of every description required at an establishment in these parts, an accommodation not everywhere to be found along this River (i.e., the Assiniboin River), arising from the repeated destructive fires to which it is exposed.

"Our people who preceded me hither to forward the work &c., by mistaking the instructions given them, made some advancement in the way of buildings in a swamp about three miles below this, which I abandoned immediately on arrival as being entirely unfit for a fort in every respect."

The fort thus built, the third and latest Brandon House, was on a high knoll about half a mile north of the Assiniboine, on what is now the north-west quarter of Section 29, Township 9, Range 17 West, about ten miles as the crow flies east by south-east of the present City of Brandon, which inherits its name. It is quite easy even yet, a round hundred years later, to fairly reconstruct the place. The corners of the stockade are distinct, and the stockade lines can be made out faintly. The gate was in the middle of the south side and there are traces also of three or four houses and a chimney or two. The stockade enclosed a space 110 feet long by 100 feet wide.

This is the post the Rotary Club of Brandon City "adopted" and marked with a cairn and inscription, which were dedicated with happy appropriateness and suitable ceremonies on the seventh day of October, 1928, exactly one hundred years from the day Chief Trader Francis Heron began to build the post.

On July 18th, 1831, Governor Simpson reported to London (5):

"The post of Brandon House has for the two last years been occupied both summer and winter, but its trade can no longer afford a summer establishment which was necessarily expensive from its exposure to the Mandal [Mandan] War parties: it has therefore been abandoned this spring, but will be re-established in the Fall."

Its final closing, and the rearrangement of the various Assiniboine posts, is given in the annual report of 1832, a part of which, surveying the past history of the Souris-mouth trade, has been already quoted. In that report the Governor continues (5):—

"During the years 1828/29, and 1829/30, white rats continued numerous, that post [Brandon House] made very large returns, but since they have disappeared its trade has greatly fallen off, and now barely defray the expenses, and as the situation is dangerous, being exposed to attacks from the Fall Indians and Mandans of the Missouri, we have determined on abandoning it this season, and on establishing a small outpost or Guard House (which will be attended with little expense) at Portage la Prairie, in its stead, attached to the Experimental Farm under the superintendence of Chief Factor Mc.Millan, for the purpose of watching the trade of the Saulteaux who usually hunt about the Pembina and Turtle Mountains.

"Q'Appelle remained unoccupied all this while as the two establishments of Brandon House and Fort Pelly were considered sufficient to meet the wants and collect the hunts of all the Indians belonging to the upper parts of the Red River [Assiniboine], but in the course of the autumn of 1830 we discovered that the American Fur Company had formed an establishment at the forks of the Missouri and Yellow Stone Rivers, which does not exceed 300 miles distant from Q'Appelle, that they had sent parties across to trade with the Indians of that neighborhood, and that the Assiniboines had attached themselves to their establishments. The favorable reception which the Assiniboines experienced from our opponents induced some of the plain Crees belonging to the upper parts of the Red River [Assinniboine] to follow their example, but both tribes felt that they were not on their own lands and that they would run the risk of becoming involved in difficulties with the Crow, Mountain, Fall and other tribes who resort to that part of the country, and we learnt from several intelligent Indians who knew their sentiments that they would be likely to return to their own lands if a post were established by us for their accomodation. With the view, therefore, of depriving our opponents of a branch of trade in Buffalo Robes which they derived from the Assiniboines, and of securing to ourselves the few furs which are still to be collected in that part of the district, we determined in council last summer on re-occupying that country by a post (called Fort Ellice in honor of the Director of that name) which was established last fall (1831), and has done fully as well as we had reason to hope, and altho' it has not yet withdrawn the Assiniboines from the Missouri, we expect that they will join us in the course of the present year."

This group of trading posts, then, along the Assiniboine River, near the mouth of the Souris, for forty-seven years,

from 1785 to 1832, made fairly colorful history that should not be forgotten. Their most distinctive features, perhaps, were the trade relations they began and kept up between Assiniboine and Missouri, and the considerable part they were forced to play in the "Pemmican War" and subsequent troubles. A cairn and tablet to commemorate the whole group has been granted by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, and is to be unveiled at Wawanesa as a central point among them, on July fifteenth, 1930, the sixtieth anniversary of the elevation of Manitoba to provincehood.

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APPENDIX I.

DATES AND DATA ABOUT BRANDON HOUSE

1793: Brandon House founded on north side of Assiniboine River.

1794: Said to have been attacked by Mandan Indians—likely Sioux.

1804 or 1805: N. W. Company moved from north to south side. Brandon House remained on north side.

1806: Alexander Henry leaves no possible doubt that in July, 1806, the H. B. Co. post was on the north side of the Assiniboine. This he explicitly states. Besides he came along the north bank to the H.B. post and had to be ferried across by the H. B. people to the south side where the N. W. post was. (Coues "New Light, etc.").

Lewis and Clark, map of expedition 1804-5-6 (no date) marks posts as described by traders to Lewis and Clark but names are grouped, so map is indecisive. However one,—Brandon House on north, and two,—N.W. or X.Y., south is correct. (Hist. of the expedition under the command of Captains Lewis and Clark, etc.).

N.B.—Coues says that Lewis's map of 1806 and Clark's of 1814 both have this arrangement.

1811: The map of the District of Assiniboia upon which Lord Selkirk took over his great territory, and signed by Lord Selkirk shows Brandon House on north side of the Assiniboine.

1814: Pemmican seized from the N.W. post on the south side was taken "across the river" to Brandon House, which therefore was on the north side. (Professor Chester Martin "Lord Selkirk")

1816: Brandon House—north side—sacked and wrecked by half-breeds.

1817: Brandon House—north side—almost completely destroyed by fire.

1817: A map of 1817 published by McMillan Brothers is indecisive, as it shows only N.W. posts. (H.B. Co. Archives.)

1818: Brandon House rebuilt on the more peaceful south side. (Fidler's account: H.B. Co. Archives.)

1818: A map by William Sax, D.P. Surveyor, shows Brandon House for the first time on the south side, but the cart road leading to Brandon House, still on the north side. The map has several errors. (Canadian Archives, Ottawa.)

1819: Arrowsmith map of 1795, corrected 1811-1818-1819. Shows Brandon House on north side. (H.B. Co. Archives).

N.B.—London maps could scarcely change so soon after the fort was moved.

1819: Peter Fidler's manuscript map made in 1819 shows Brandon House on the south side. (H.B. Co. Archives).

1819: Fidler's description of Brandon House is also clearly of the south side fort, six miles from the mouth of the Souris. (H.B. Co. Archives).

1820-23: Chief Factor John McDonald reports that "Brandon House is situated four miles above the mouth of the Souris on the north side (of the Assiniboine)." (H.B. Co. Archives.)

1824: Brandon House was abandoned. (Report of Governor Simpson—H. B. Co. Archives.)

1828: Brandon House was re-established twelve miles up the river on the north side. (Report of Francis Heron and of Governor Simpson. H.B. Co. Archives).

1832: This latest Brandon House finally abandoned. (Report of Governor Simpson. H.B. Co. Archives).

Having been first north, then south temporarily, then north again, and later re-established on a new north site, then finally abandoned, it would be expected that London map makers would be confused, and place the post almost indiscriminately north and south.

1824: Arrowsmith map of 1795, corrected to 1824, shows Brandon House on the north side. (H.B. Co. Archives).

1824: Arrowsmith map of 1822, corrected to 1824 shows Brandon House on the north side. (Canadian Archives, Ottawa.)

1850: Map of North America, "ordered by the House of Commons to be printed 12th July, 1850, from the papers of the Hudson's Bay Company" shows Brandon House on the south side. This, it may be remarked, is eighteen years after the latest Brandon House was abandoned, and likely follows Fidler's map, then, no doubt, as now, in the possession of the H.B. Co. (Can. Archives, Ottawa.)

About
1850: Map—a copy to illustrate Paul Kane's travels. Brandon House south side.

1854: "Map published April 25th, 1854, by J. Arrowsmith, containing the latest information the documents of the Hudson's Bay Company furnish" (again likely Peter Fidler) shows Brandon House (abandoned finally 22 years before) on the south side. (Map in possession of author.)

1857: "Map ordered by the House of Commons to be printed 31st July and 11th August, 1857"—Brandon House south side. (Canadian Archives, Ottawa.)

1857: Map published in Toronto by authority Hon. Joseph Cauchon, a copy, doubtless, of London maps, and with many errors such as Pine House on South side and Birdtail House on west side, has Brandon House on south side. (Canadian Archives, Ottawa.)

APPENDIX II.

EXTRACT FROM GENERAL REPORT OF RED RIVER DISTRICT

PETER FIDLER—MAY, 1819

VII NUMBER AND SITUATION OF THE POSTS IN THE DISTRICT: Beggining at Lake Winipic the first post occuppied by the Coy, is 2 or 3 miles up Riviere au' mort or Netly Creek on the west bank of the Red River for these several years the trade from there is very trifling since the rats & beaver have become scarce. The second Post is at the Forks or junction of the Red and Assiniboyne river on the north side established by us 2 years and by the N.W. Co. in 1811. Brandon House 6 miles above the Souri River on the south side and established in 1793.

The next post up the Assiniboyne river is Beaver Creek 20 miles by land from Riviere qui' appell' House established in 1817. The other Post is below Turtle river about 15 miles by land above Pamb'na these are the different trading posts in this district inhabited this winter. 2nd Dead river House 3 very poor small Houses. At the Forks large buildings are begginning to be erected & to be enclosed with excellent oak piquets. Brandon House is in a ruinous state occassioned by the wabrules (or halfbreeds) in 1816—a small new house was built here

last summer 30 by 14 feet. There are a smith & coopers shops also a Trading room Provisions stores and 2 stables with Houses for men & Indians when they come to the Houses to Trade.

At Beaver creek there are several buildings as being a great place for the stone Indians & enclosed with poplar piquets about 35 yards square. 3d. the only place at present where there are gardens are at the Forks, Brandon House & Beaver Creek, at the Forks last summer about 2 acres in cultivation (purchased with a small house from a freeman) planted with potatoes a little wheat & barley but the grasshoppers destroyed the whole of the latter. this spring the ground is considerably enlarged making use of the plow. At Brandon House last summer the Barley was destroyed by the grasshoppers & the great & almost continued drought entirely destroyed the potatoes, turnips, &c., &c., so that there was not the least benefit derived from the labor. since 1812 there was always good crops of every thing untill 1816 when the dry summers commenced the land here (Brandon House) under cultivation was upwards of 3 English acres at Beaver Creek about half an acre enclosed which produced a few potatoes & a few kegs barley with some other smaller vegetables but the dry weather greatly deteriorated the expected produce. This spring they are going to enlarge the garden a little but at present (22d ap., 1819) the season has every appearance of being as dry as latterly. 4th The quality of the soil at Dead River is dark rich mould. at the Forks rather more sandy but produces good returns. At Brandon House still more sandy but in wet or rainy seasons produces abundant crops. Beaver Creek better soil not so sandy as at Bn House and generally tolerable crops. 5th. Generally the spade & hoe is used by turning over the soil in the spring when the seed is put in. At Brandon House the plow is used manure is seldom used except for raising Cucumbers, Melons or onions, The wheat & Barley is cut down with the sickle & the potatoes taken up generally with the spade sometimes with the plow and are secured generally in cellars within the House well covered with grass to secure them as well as the turnips from the frost.

6th. Potatoes at the trading establishments have generally been the most attended to which was first introduced into these parts about the year 1780 these with a few cabbage & Turnips constituted the whole produce of the gardens till within these 8 or 10 years wheat & particularly Barley have been raised at several of the Trading posts. Excellent potatoes can be raised in the Atabasca as well as cabbage. Wheat & Barley very probably would not come to maturity there When I wintered at the Atabasca Lake we had good gardens there in 1803-4-& 5 (and the Canadians followed our example). The Wheat produces 40 the Barley 45 and the Potatoes about 50 bushels for one sown the potatoes are generally put into the ground about 10th May & taken up middle Octr but they are eatable after 25th July. Oats have as yet been tried but in very small quantities, but they produced well, & of a good body. 7th. The cultivation of this River may be extended with one additional hand to more than treble the ground under present culture. Millstones might also be had to reduce it into flour &c. Where horses may be had as in this river several acres might be sown with wheat, Barley, &c but the few men generally left Inland would not be able to secure the whole crop that might be put in the ground in the Spring without any additional expence. 8th. Sturgeon which passes by here (Brand. House) about 10th May every Spring would afford a very ample supply for many people Some of them ascends as high as shell river more than 800 miles by the River.—The natives frequently make fences of wood to prevent their descent to Lake Winipic and by this means preserve a constant and very ample supply for Summer. The Traders sometimes pursue this Indian method a few Burbat or what is commonly called here Cat fish about 8 to 12 lb. each There are also flat fish about ½ to ¾ each besides 2 or three other kinds. Buffaloe are in general plentiful in this district particularly the Southern & Western parts of it also Red Deer and some moose Deer or Elk in the Turtle mountain which is like an island in the open plains about 25

miles long by near 10 wide, very woody interspersed with numerous small lakes & a few creeks which discharges itself into the Souri or Sandy river, formerly plenty of Beaver in it now very few. As the country wherever I have been & by the invariable information of the different Tribes I have enquired at agree that the country is becoming much drier than formerly & numbers of small Lakes become good firm land well covered with Timber of various kinds but generally Willows or Poplar or asp is the first produce. There are a number of small Lakes East of Brandon House that produce the Tizina aquatica or Wild rice a few years ago an Indian sowed some in 2 or 3 places on South side the Assiniboyne which grew and multiplied where the water is too deep or the seasons too dry very slender Crops are brought to maturity.

(H.B.C. Factory Journals. Reports, Box 521, No. 495.)

APPENDIX III.

FOUR SOURIS-MOUTH POST SITES AS OBSERVED BY J. B. TYRRELL IN 1890

Mr. J. B. Tyrrell, eminent Canadian historian, "Re-discoverer" of David Thompson and editor of the Champlain Society volumes on David Thompson and Samuel Hearne, has kindly made available his notes upon four of the Souris-mouth sites as they appeared in 1890, with sketch plans of two. At this time engaged as a geologist on the Geological Survey of Canada he descended the Assiniboine River in a small collapsible canvas canoe from Fort Pelly to Portage la Prairie.

"After our examination of the Boss Hill fort we continued the descent of the Assiniboine River, passed Brandon, and on the evening of July 8th we camped in the N.E. quarter of Section 19, Tp. 8, R. 16, West of the First Meridian on the east side of the river. As we had been informed that there were signs of an old fort on the west side of the river in this vicinity, we crossed it, and found the site of an old fort on the line between the E. & W. halves of Sect. 19, and 125 yards south of the half mile post on the north line of the Section. (See note A).

"It is situated on a level grassy terrace 20 ft. above the river, at the foot of a little slope rising to higher land behind and 75 paces away from a dry run through which the river probably flowed when this place was occupied. Now the river is 150 yards farther east across a flat that is wooded with small oak and willow.

"The fort was laid out square with its stockade walls running true N. and S. and E. and W. The enclosure is marked by a trench two feet wide and nearly a foot deep in the middle, in which there has doubtless been a fence or line of posts surrounding the buildings. On the east and west sides gateways about 10 ft. wide are shown, on the east side by a break in the line of the trench, and on both sides by little pits where posts have been sunk to support look-out towers.

"Beginning with the N.W. corner of the wall; at 34 ft. there is a break in the line of the trench marking the position of a wicket, 3-4 ft. wide. At 49 ft. an irregular depression 6-8 inches deep begins and continues to 67 ft., thickly strewn with the bones of buffalo. From 67-90 ft. this depression is 5 ft. wide, and runs along within the wall. From its S.E. corner a depression connects with a pit 5 ft. wide 5 ft. from the wall. At 115 ft. two little trenches, now about a foot deep, 6 feet apart and 6 ft. from the stockade, begin and extend to within 4 ft. of the east side of the enclosure. There is a slight sag in the centre between these trenches.

"Going south on the east and west sides at 60-70 ft. there are what would appear to be gateways, directly opposite each other. Just outside of the line of the trench, and also 6 ft. within it, are pits representing post holes, as look-outs were doubtless erected over these posts.

"Going west on the south side, from 15 to 22 feet, the trench is broken by a little ridge, indicating the possible position of a gate, in which case the two end ones would probably be only look-out places.

At the S.W. corner there is a pit representing the position of a bastion about 8 ft. square, the entrance into which would appear to have been directly in the corner.

"Stretching along the south side from this bastion there would appear to have been three houses, or one house with three partitions, for three little heaps of stones and burnt clay are seen with cellars beside the eastern two. The houses would appear to have been 10 ft. from the southern wall and 18 ft. wide. At the N.E. their outline is seen, but elsewhere it is too indistinct to be made out. The middle heap of stones is much the largest.

"The north side of the enclosure is, however, where most of the houses were situated. 27 ft. from the N. & W. sides is a pile of clay and boulders 18 inches high that represents an old chimney. Further east is another heap of clay with a few boulders, south of which is a pit 16 x 11 ft. and 3 ft. 7 in. deep. There are two other cellars 14 x 16 x 4 ft. and 18 x 18 x 5 ft., besides which there do not appear to be any heaps for the chimneys. In the middle of the yard as shown is a pit about 8 ft. long and 3 ft. wide that possibly represents a filled in well."

Second Old Fort. (See note B.)

The location of this fort was on the middle E. & W. line of Section 19 and with a bearing S. 30½°E (Mag) from the half M. post just north of the other fort. It was situated on a slight knoll on the brow of a level alluvial plain 30 ft. above and overlooking the river. Part of the site is now covered with scrub oak, hazel and service berry bushes, behind which the plain where most of the fort was situated, is ploughed, and therefore the positions of any fortifications cannot be made out. We first saw five shallow pits and one fairly deep one; along with which are several little heaps of reddened clay and cracked boulders indicating the positions of chimneys. Between 60 and 70 paces north of this collection of pits and knolls are two other large chimney-piles of stones on the brow of the hill, N.W. of the largest of which is a large cellar pit, while in line with these to the S.E. are two other shallow depressions. 28 paces to the S.W. is a line of 4 shallow cellars with chimneys beside them and around are pieces of burnt clay that have been between the logs of the houses, showing them to have been destroyed by fire. In the debris of the house in the west corner, I found some fragments of fine blue china. This fort, if it was separate, covered nearly an acre. The ground has all been ploughed and the remains of all fortifications are gone but great numbers of chips of poplar are seen on the space that would have lain between the two forts.

"A grassy slope declines from the brow of the plain on which the forts were situated, to the edge of the channel of the river, 130 paces, and there is a deep trail cut down the bank to the river."

"The following morning, July 9th, we found indications of another fort (see note C) on the east side of the river, almost directly opposite the mouth of the creek that flows between the two old posts just located on the south-west side and still on the N.E. ¼ of S. 19. There is a little grassy prairie of about 4 or 5 acres in extent in the midst of a forest of small white poplar. In the middle of this is a ridge of soft light grey clayey soil about 30 ft. above the river, running S.E. and N.W., from which the land slopes back into the woods and on the other side first into a little run and then over another narrow bridge into the river. An old trail cuts deep through the brow of the ridge and opposite it the river is shallow and fordable, with a gravel bed. About a mile away across in the distance, wooded sand hills cut off the view. The little prairie is covered with long wiry grass and the old dead grass makes a soft mat at its roots.

"The remains of the fort are scattered along the top of this ridge. They consist towards the N.W. of two shallow pits and a deep one that is still 6½ ft. deep. N.E. of this last pit is a shallow pit on the side of the hill. Again S.E. of the deep pit are two other large deep ones

70 feet apart, the N.W. one 22 x 14 ft., and about half way between them is a little pile of boulders representing a chimney. Close behind these three cellars is a light trench running S. 53° E. which can be followed for 44 paces to the S.E. end of the last cellar where it appears to end; its other end is indistinct, but it does not appear to go round the N.E. cellar. S.E. of this site for 70 paces to the woods there would appear to have been several houses—five shallow pits can be counted.

The farmer living opposite here informs me that there is another fort on the north side of the river about 2½ miles farther up stream, in Sect. 35, Tp. 8, R. 17. (See note D.)

Pine Fort.

"After leaving the mouth of the Souris River . . . . On the evening of July 10, we camped on the north bank of the river on a grassy plain, near a small grove of poplar. The camp proved to be a few hundred yards east of the site of Pine Fort, and as we afterwards learned it was about a mile in a straight line west of the mouth of Pine Creek, though very much farther by the course of the river.

"The site of the fort is on the N.E. quarter of Sect. 36, Tp. 8, R. 14, west of the Principal Meridian, on a level plain 20 feet above the river and covered with a grassy sod. Sixty yards west of the site of the fort a wagon trail runs down to the river. To the north the country rises in several low poplar-covered terraces for about a mile and a half to the high bank of the river valley. The face of this bank is for the most part grassy, while the crest is covered with poplar. Towards the north east, along the valley of Pine Creek, the sky line is broken by a row of pointed spruce. On the south the scarped bank of the river channel cuts through the old enclosure of the fort, one of the chimney mounds being now partly cut away. From the bottom of the scarped bank a sand and gravel bar a hundred paces wide extends out to the edge of the water of the shallow river, which just above is broken by several small low islands.

"The site of the fort is now largely washed away. What is left of the line of the old fortifications or stockade can be clearly followed, and from old pieces of wood still remaining in it, is seen to have been constructed of spruce posts about 4 inches in diameter driven into the ground. Their decay has left a shallow trench.

"Beginning at the top of the bank of the river, at the S.W. corner of what remains of the site of the fort, the line of the stockade runs N. 13 W. (magnetic = N 2 E true) 13 paces. There it turns at right angles and runs N 77 E, 56 paces to the N.E. corner of the enclosures where there appears to have been a bastion 8 ft. square. Thence the stockade line runs S 13 E. 15 paces to the top of the scarped bank.

At the top of the bank, and just inside of this line of the stockade, is a little pit 3 feet in diameter, and, as shown by the sections on the face of the bank, 26 inches deep. It is filled with burnt clay, charred bones, etc. For 22 yards from the eastern end of the enclosure the ground is otherwise unbroken, west of which are two depressions 6 feet square and 6 inches deep. The principal feature of the enclosures is a large mound 11 yards in diameter, 2 feet high, and with a pit in the centre 18 ft. in diameter and 3 feet deep. This doubtless represents the remains of a house, and part of its timbers are still projecting from the bank. At the N.W. and S.W. corners of the pit are piles of stones representing the old chimneys. A little farther west is a large pit 2 feet deep, and several smaller ones, but no signs of any chimneys.

"Outside of the enclosure, and 8 yards east of its eastern end is a large shallow pit on the edge of the bank, indicating where a house has doubtless stood."

J. B. TYRRELL.

Toronto,
Jan. 16th, 1929.

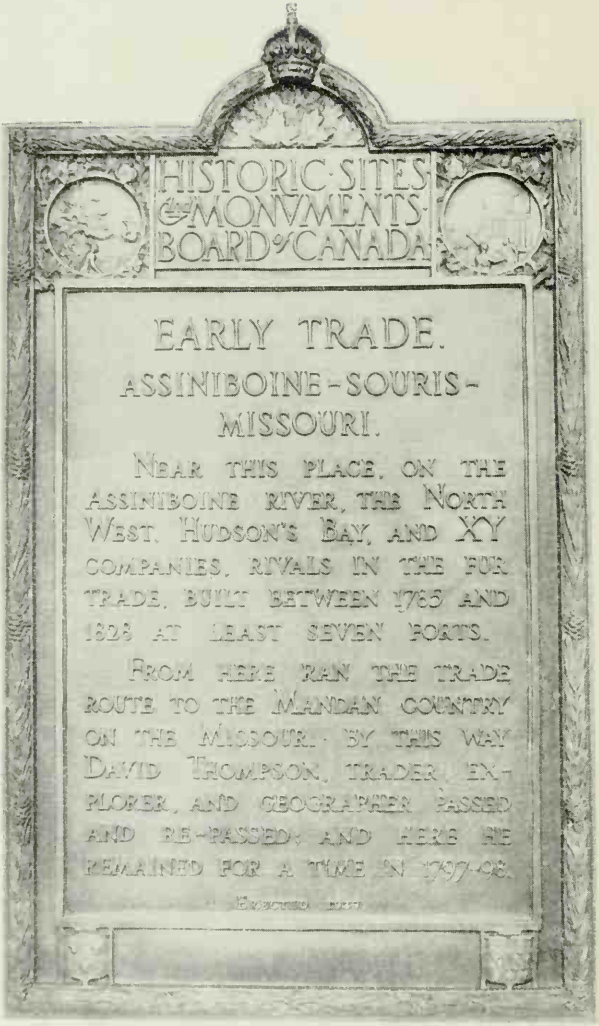
Notes by D. A. S.:

(A) The site in Mair's field, likely old Fort La Souris of the N.-W. Co. (1805-1821).

(B) The site on "Brown's farm", likely the fort of the X. Y. Co. (1799-1805).

(C) Site of the post of the N.-W. Co. at which David Thompson was entertained, variously called Assiniboine House, Fort Assiniboine, McDonnell's House (1793-1805).

(D) Site of Brandon House Number One, (likely 1793-1818 and 1821-1824).


HISTORIC SITES
& MONUMENTS
BOARD of CANADA
EARLY TRADE.
ASSINIBOINE - SOURIS -
MISSOURI.
NEAR THIS PLACE, ON THE ASSINIBOINE RIVER, THE NORTH WEST, HUDSON'S BAY, AND XY COMPANIES, RIVALS IN THE FUR TRADE, BUILT BETWEEN 1785 AND 1828 AT LEAST SEVEN FORTS.
FROM HERE RAN THE TRADE ROUTE TO THE MANDAN COUNTRY ON THE MISSOURI. BY THIS WAY DAVID THOMPSON, TRADER, EXPLORER, AND GEOGRAPHER PASSED AND RE-PASSED; AND HERE HE REMAINED FOR A TIME IN 1797-98.

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